Amendments to the Claims:

Cancel claim 2, without prejudice.

This listing of claims will replace all prior visions and listings of claims in the application:

List of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of applying a metal coating to graphite, comprising the steps of:

anodic etching said graphite in an alkaline etchant[[,]];

Pd seeding said graphite; and then

electroplating said graphite with said metal.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim ~~2~~ 1, further comprising the following step between said Pd seeding and said electroplating:

electroless plating said graphite to reinforce said Pd coating.

4. (currently amended) The method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim 3, wherein at least Ni or Cu is deposited in said electroless plating step.

5. (currently amended) The method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim 1, further comprising the following step between said anodic etching and a subsequent step:

directly transferring said graphite, obtained with said anodic etching step, into water or a weak aqueous solution.

6. (currently amended) The method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim 5, wherein between said anodic etching and said electroplating no ultrasound treatment is implemented.

7. (currently amended) The method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim 1, wherein said electroplating involves at least one of the following ~~group~~ metals: Ag, Cu, Ni and Sn.

8. (currently amended) The method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim 1, wherein said electroplating utilizes a current density in the range of 0.1 to 10 A/dm^2.

9. (currently amended) The method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim 1, wherein [[the]] a current duration in said electroplating is in the range of 5 to 90 minutes.

10. (currently amended) The method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim 1, wherein said ~~anodic etching is done in~~ alkaline etchant is a solution of at least one of NaOH ~~and/or~~ and KOH having a concentration in the range 10 to 70% by weight.

11. (currently amended) The method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim 10, wherein said anodic etching is done at a temperature in the range of 20°C to 70°C.

12. (currently amended) The method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim 1, wherein said graphite comprises graphite particles bound by plastics.

13. (currently amended) A method of fabricating a solder connection to a graphite component, comprising the steps of:

electroplating ~~wherein~~, by [[a]] said method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim 1, [[a]] said metal coating ~~is deposited~~ on said graphite component~~, after which;~~ and

applying a solder pad ~~is applied~~ to said metal coating as thus produced.

14. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim 1, wherein said anodic etching is performed with an applied electrical potential in the range of 4V to 20V.

15. (currently amended) ~~A~~ The method ~~as set forth in~~ of claim 14, wherein said anodic etching has a duration in the range of 5 to 90 minutes, with the actual duration being inversely proportional to the applied electrical potential.

16. (new) A method of applying a metal coating to graphite, comprising the steps of:

anodic etching said graphite in a solution of at least one of NaOH and KOH having a concentration in the range of 10 to 70% by weight; and then

electroplating said graphite with said metal.

17. (new) A method of applying a metal coating to graphite, said graphite comprising graphite particles bound by plastics, the method comprising the steps of:

anodic etching said graphite in an alkaline etchant; and then

electroplating said graphite with said metal.

18. (new) A method of fabricating a solder connection to a graphite component, comprising the steps of:

anodic etching said graphite component in an alkaline etchant;

electroplating said graphite component with a metal coating; and then

applying a solder pad to said metal coating as thus produced.

19. (new) A method of applying a metal coating to graphite, comprising the steps of:

anodic etching said graphite in an alkaline etchant with an applied electrical potential in the range of 4V to 20V and a duration in the range of 5 to 90 minutes, with the actual duration being inversely proportional to the applied electrical potential; and then

electroplating said graphite with said metal.